

Akron City

January-April 2006

Akron Helps Hurricane's Neediest

Firestone Park facelift, Shovelfuls of progress, Hot Metal now Hot Tech.



Akron City Workers Deployed to the Gulf to aid in Katrina relief

Akron City Red Cross Volunteers

James Anderson, *Maintenance*
Kathy Cahill, *Recreation Bureau*
Carrie Carlson, *Akron Police*
Dept. secretary
Yvonne Demyan, *Public Health*
nurse
John Eaton, *311 Center*
Jeff Fusco, *Deputy Service*
Director
Chuck Heimbaugh, *Capital*
Planning manager
Brett Hendren, *Economic*
Development
Paul McCutcheon, *Engineering*
Brian Mesek, *Income Tax*
Michael Swires, *(to be deployed*
later)

FEMA Volunteers

Greg Burgoon, *Building*
Inspection Superintendent

Akron Police Officers

Lieutenant Charles Brown
Lieutenant Cindy Christman
Detective Bill Bosak
Detective Shawn Brown
Officer Bill Campbell
Officer Cathy Clawson
Officer Jim Conley
Officer Ken Dies
Detective Sherri Robinson
Detective Michael Shaeffer
Officer Joe Sidoti
Officer Steve Swartz

Akron Firefighters

William Johnston
Mike Steele
Dave O'Neal
Mike Reed
Doug Fela
Scott Moyers
Brian Weaver
Jerome Crawford
Jim Deistel
Dennis Carter
Jerry Elie
Phil Gauer



From the Mayor...

In Akron, we tend to measure the inconvenience of a heavy snowfall by its volume, its cold temperatures and its duration. In the Spring, we're on the lookout for the occasional tornado that whips through here every few years.

However, it's not easy for us to imagine ourselves in the shoes of Americans whose cities and families have been turned upside-down for years, maybe decades, to come.

But we certainly try.

On August 29, at 6 a.m., Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana. By noon, levees were collapsing in New Orleans. Within a day, 80 percent of New Orleans was under water.

That night at Akron City Hall, I gathered our emergency management team to determine what we could do to help. Immediately, Akron safety and service forces stepped forward to volunteer. At Public Works, managers made a quick list of heavy equipment we could send to the Gulf Coast without hampering our own operations — including dump trucks, front loaders, compressors — the things that a city under siege needs the most.

Akron police and firefighters offered to head south as soon as they were needed by FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We would send a dozen of each — firefighters and police officers — to the Gulf to help FEMA manage the difficult job of cleaning-up.

A few days later, I attended a reception to welcome Craig Chaffinch, the new CEO of the American Red Cross, Summit County Chapter, to town. Chaffinch told me what they needed on the Gulf Coast: money and volunteers.

The money part was already underway. With *Beacon Journal* Publisher Jim Crutchfield, Akron Community Foundation president Jody Bacon, and First Merit president Nick Browning, we "put the band back together" — the team that, in 2001, was responsible for Greater Akron's contribution of a post-9/11 gift of a million dollars in safety vehicles to New York City.

Again, the people of Greater Akron responded




generously. Within 60 days, we raised over \$800,000, most of which was paid to the Red Cross, and about \$200,000 of which was used to purchase a refrigerated truck and a cargo van for the Foodbank that serves our adopted sister-city of Biloxi, Mississippi.

Mississippi. On a sunny day in October, we presented Akron's gifts to Biloxi officials who, for the first time in two months could smile. They cried tears of joy as they took Akron's gift back home, although their own homes and thousands of others had been destroyed.

The volunteer part was a little more challenging because the Red Cross needed people to be trained and then deployed from Akron for at least three weeks at a time. When we put out the first notice in early September, it didn't surprise me that more than 60 Akron City workers stepped forward immediately to offer their service.

Ultimately, 11 City workers became Red Cross volunteers and were deployed as needed to manage shelters, serve food, and do clean-up tasks, as you will read on page 6.

Their names are printed here for all of us to thank.

For all those who contributed to the fund for Biloxi and the Red Cross, thank you for once again showing Akron's generous spirit. May you and your family have a joyful and peaceful holiday season and from all of us, I wish you a safe and prosperous new year ahead. 



Donald L. Phang

Akron City

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Our Cover Photo...

...is **Bruce Ford's** illustration of Akron's presentation of two trucks to officials of Biloxi Mississippi. Pictured with Mayor Plusquellic are officials of the Red Cross, Akron Community Foundation, the *Beacon Journal*, and First Merit Bank.

Tell us what you think by replying to editor@ci.akron.oh.us

Or share your thoughts with the mayor at mayor@ci.akron.oh.us

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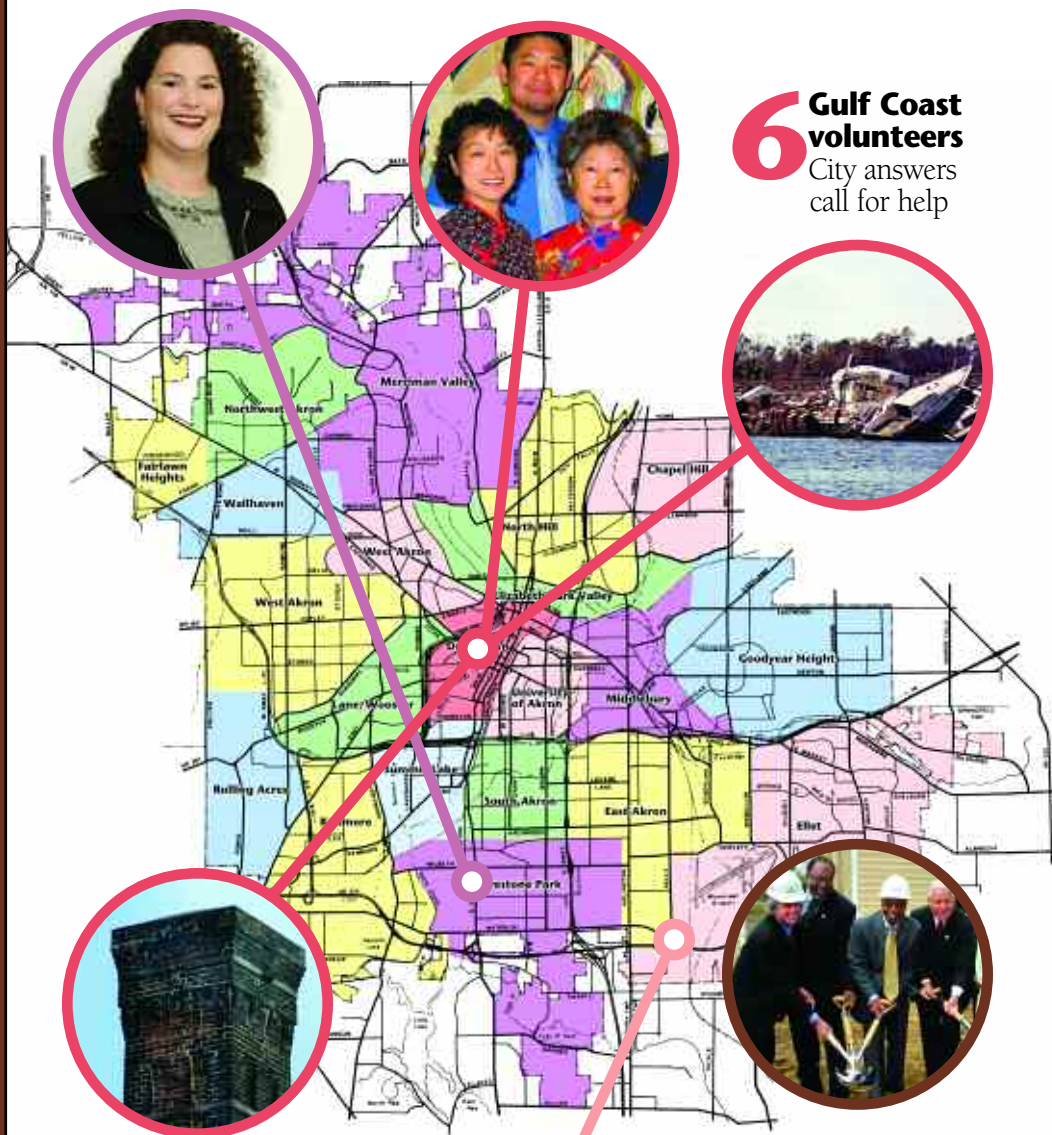
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Neighborhoods



Firestone Park

South Main Face-Lift Spurs Firestone Park Resurgence

By Robert Sberna

When Harvey S. Firestone conceived and built Firestone Park, he foresaw a residential district that would serve the recreational, educational and spiritual needs of his plant workers.

Firestone, a founder of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co., created a quaint neighborhood that included tree-lined streets, schools, churches, businesses and a centrally located park shaped like the original Firestone shield emblem. While Firestone Park has outgrown its original borders since its establishment in 1915, the area has maintained its sense of community.

Tina Merlitti, Ward 7 Councilperson, says the neighborhood is appealing because of its vibrancy. “There’s a lot of community groups and opportunities for people to get involved in events,” says Merlitti, who moved to Firestone Park from Stow eight years ago.

As an example, she says the Firestone Park Citizens Council coordinates a Fall Harvest Festival, an Easter Bunny Festival and several summer celebrations.

Merlitti, 34, says an influx of young families has changed the traditional demographics of Firestone Park. “We’re seeing that a lot of older folks, who mainly worked in the rubber industry, are moving out,” she explains. “A lot of first-time homebuyers are coming here because they’re attracted to the quality of our housing. These older homes have

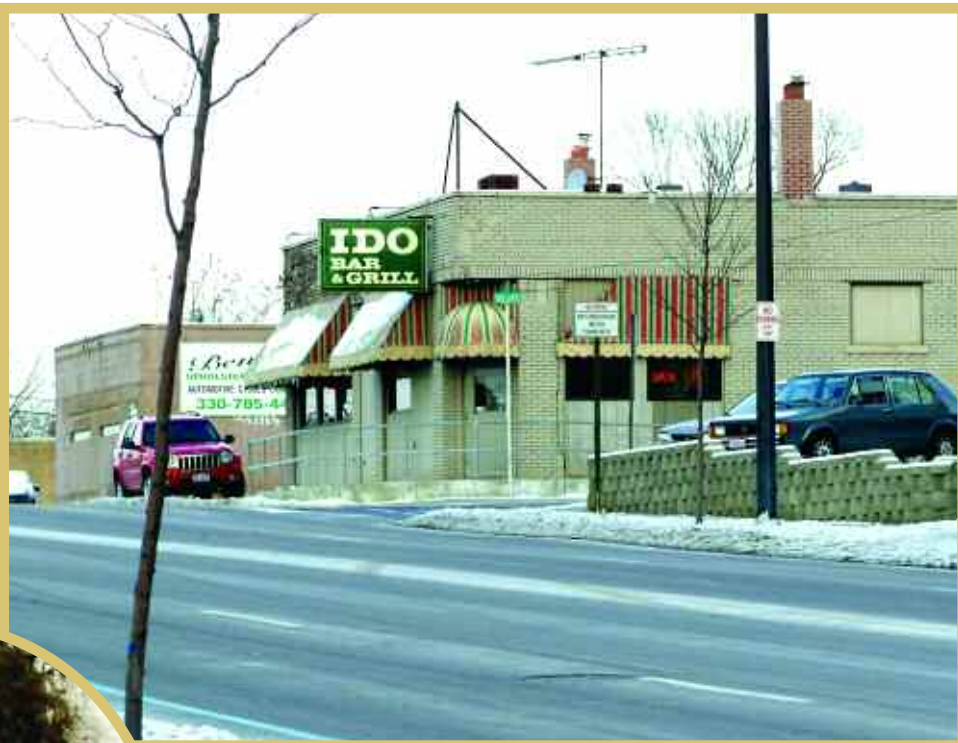


hardwood floors, lots of built-ins and a real sense of character.”

Last year, the new Firestone Park Branch Library opened, while construction began on the Voris Community Learning Center, the first of several planned facilities that will offer education and recreation programs to residents of all ages.

The neighborhood also boasts Firestone Stadium, which underwent a \$4 million renovation in 1999 and is home to the Akron Racers, the reigning champions of the Women’s Fastpitch Professional Softball League.

Merlitti says City officials are focused on promoting commercial activity in Firestone



Park, with a key initiative being the redevelopment of South Main Street. The improvements include roadway widening, new curbs and lighting. “We’re also offering façade grants to store owners,” she says. “The idea is to revitalize the businesses in the area.”

Noting that Firestone Park is conveniently located to downtown, Merlitti says, “There are a lot of positives about this neighborhood. We’re working on redefining this neighborhood as an integrated area where people can get their needs served close to home. One of our goals is to balance the housing with retail and light industrial firms.” 



Left to Right: Luba Halamay, Pauline Halamay, lab mascot Sasha, Cleo Halamay, and Eddie Halamay who is holding a photo of his father and company founder, Walter Halamay, who died in 1999.

Technology and Service is Focus at Halamay Color Lab

By Robert Sberna

From its beginnings in 1958 as a specialist in processing black-and-white film, Halamay Color Lab is now thriving in the digital age. A highly regarded photo finishing lab, Halamay provides services to commercial and professional photographers.

"Basically, we're expert color correctors," says Ed Halamay. "Our niche is providing the best quality print." He and his sister, Luba, the company's president, are continuing the work ethic that was instilled by their late father, Walter, a native Ukrainian who immigrated here with his wife, Pauline, after World War II.

"Dad got a job as a janitor in a photo lab," Ed explains. "He then got an opportunity to learn film processing. When he opened his own lab, he worked day and night developing film."

Ed and Luba, who say they "grew up in the business," made significant investments in digital technology in the mid-1990s. "We saw that the future of photography is digital," says Ed. "We made some expensive decisions to purchase a digital printer, scanners and computer equipment."

Noting that his mother, Pauline, still regularly comes into the shop, Ed says, "My father spent a lot of time working with customers. We still place a high priority on customer satisfaction. We like to think that nobody tries harder than us." ©

"Our niche is providing the best quality print."

Neighborhoods Downtown



House of Hunan is a family effort: Left to right- Lawrence and Cheryl Suen, Dustin, Madame Suen, CEO Jack Suen, and Nancy Tsai Sun.

Akron House of Hunan

Trivia question: *What is the Akron Roll?*

- a) A dance created in 1920 to rival the Charleston
- b) Another name for the spare tire around a man's mid-section
- c) Breakfast biscuit created by Mrs. Simon Perkins
- d) Customer-invented dish at downtown restaurant

If you selected "d" we might guess you have visited the House of Hunan at 12 East Exchange St., one of three area restaurants started by the Suen family since coming here from Taiwan in 1978.

The restaurants are operated by three Suen brothers: Jack, manager of business affairs; Eric, who oversees the kitchen staff; and Lawrence, the executive chef. The Suens, who are second-generation Taiwanese-Americans, are assisted by their spouses and Dustin, a third-generation family member.

The Suens launched their business in 1988 when they took over the Fairlawn House of Hunan. Ten years later, they transformed the street-level space of the AC&Y Railroad building downtown into an intimate restaurant featuring a culturally diverse menu. At that location, Lawrence offers Chinese dishes as well as sushi and other Japanese specialties. He has recently added Thai cuisine.

The Suen's third restaurant, House of Hunan Omakase Executive Dining, offers one of most unique dining experiences in the Akron area. Omakase (pronounced oh muh KAH seh) literally means "chef, I'm in your hands" and a visit to the restaurant is indeed a culinary expedition. The especially adventurous may want to order the chef's choice, which entails a multi-course meal including exquisite off-menu items.

Just don't forget to order the Akron Roll. ©

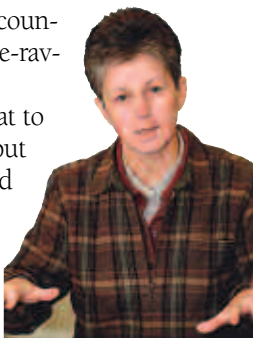
CITY WORKERS ANSWER CALL FOR HURRICANE RELIEF HELP

By Robert Sberna

Volunteer Photos by Bruce Ford

As an Akron police officer, **Lt. Cynthia Christman** has faced dangerous situations. But her law enforcement experiences gave her scant preparation for the 10-foot alligators, poisonous snakes and polluted swamp water she encountered in the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast.

"I didn't know what to expect down there, but I felt a need to go and help those people who were hurting," explains Christman, one of 36 City employees who



journeyed south to help the hundreds of thousands whose lives were upended.

When the request came for employees to join the relief effort, the response was swift and sure. In late August, as Hurricane Katrina and its massive storm surge hammered New Orleans and other Gulf Coast communities, Akron police, firefighters, and other workers were asking how they could help.

In October, 12 police officers, 12 firefighters, and **Greg Burgoon**, the City's Chief Building Official, were dispatched to stricken areas of Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Eleven other employees, from various City departments, were trained and deployed by the American Red Cross to assist with food service, building inspection, shelter supervision and document processing.

Craig Chaffinch, CEO of the American Red Cross, Summit County Chapter, commended the City employees for their service. "Volunteerism is a huge element of the Red Cross," says Chaffinch. "The City employees and the entire community really chipped in to help. And that help was very important to the hurricane victims."

The volunteers spent two to three weeks in the Gulf Coast, typically working 12- to 16-hour days (while continuing to receive their regular salary from the City). Before

they departed from Akron, they were told to prepare for hot weather, and bring drinking water and a sleeping bag. While they faced austere conditions, the volunteers say their experiences were gratifying and, in some cases, life-changing.

Here are their stories:

In Southwest Louisiana, Lt. Christman worked 12-hour patrols guarding against looting and other crimes. She also assisted teams of morticians who worked to recover coffins that had been dislodged from cemeteries by the storm surge. "The mortician teams had to wade through the flooded areas and pick up the coffins and remains and put them in refrigerated trucks," says Christman. "My duty was to stand by and protect the workers from the snakes and alligators." Christman, a 13-year police officer who serves as assistant commander of a patrol shift, says her stint in Louisiana was rewarding. "While we were out on street patrol, citizens were constantly coming up and thanking us for being there."

Amidst the rushed evacuation of New Orleans, families became separated, with some members ending up in



faraway locations. **Paul McCutcheon** was assigned to an evacuee shelter in Texas, where he helped coordinate a missing persons database. "If someone wanted to find a family member, we could use the database to try and locate them," says McCutcheon, who works in the City's Engineering Bureau. "If we were able to find a missing family member, especially a child, it was very gratifying."

Chuck Heimbaugh, a member of the Planning Department and a 30-year City employee, helped evacuees fill out claims for financial assistance. "The Red Cross then asked me to be a shelter supervisor," he says. "I had never even been in a shelter, let alone supervise one. We had some people there who had endured two hurricanes. When Katrina hit in New Orleans, they were moved to a shelter outside of the city. Then Hurricane Rita hit and they got displaced a second time. It was very unfortunate."



Lt. Charles Brown, a 20-year veteran of the Police Department, says it's his nature to seize opportunities to "give back" when he can. "That's why I became a police officer," says Brown, who is Commander of



Photo by Lt. Cynthia Christman



Photo by Jeff Fusco

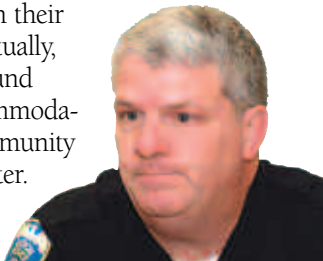


Photo by Jeff Fusco



Community Relations. "What affected me most was the courage of the folks who lost all their possessions. They picked up their lives and they were willing to give us food, water, encouragement and gratitude. It helped me to understand that the things that are valuable in your life are your family and your friends."

During his first couple of nights in Louisiana, **Jim Conley** slept in a tent. Some of his fellow police officers slept in their cruisers. Eventually, the officers found sleeping accommodations in a community recreation center.



Conley, who was assigned to patrol duty and curfew enforcement, is an Akron Crime Prevention Officer and SWAT team member. He says the local sheriff's deputies were grateful for the presence of Akron police. "The deputies needed a rest," he notes. "They were almost too tired to say 'hello' to us."

Akron Police detective **Michael L. Shaeffer** says it wasn't uncommon for local officers to work 24 hours a day and sleep in police stations. In the hardest-hit Gulf Coast areas, many police officers lost their homes or sustained severe structural damage. "But they weren't able to take a break to inspect the damage," says Shaeffer, 17-year veteran. "The cops down there suffered their own devastation. We were able

to offer them respite so they could get their lives back to some normalcy."



Carrie Carlson says she was inspired to join the relief effort by the memory of her father, a retired Akron firefighter who passed away in April. "My dad, Richard Carlson, would have been first in line to help anybody," says Carlson, a patrol secretary for the Akron Police Department. Carlson worked in an evacuee shelter in Texas. "Those people didn't have a home to return to. It made me appreciate everything I have. But most of all, I feel that my dad is proud of me."

John Eaton says his military experience served him well as a shelter supervisor in Crockett, Texas. "We worked 18-hour days setting up schedules, making sure people got medical assistance, and helping people with special needs, such as kidney dialysis," says Eaton, who works in Akron's 311 Center. "Sometimes it got tense in the shelter, so I definitely was able to use the crisis management




and organizational skills that I gained in the military," he says.

By volunteering to help the hurricane survivors, **Brent Hendren** says he hoped to set an example for his children. Hendren served meals to residents of Plaquemines Parish in the southernmost area of

Louisiana. An 11-year City employee who works in Economic Development, Hendren explains, "This was an opportunity for me to show my kids that it's important to give back and help others. What truly moved me was the appreciation that was openly shown by the people."

Jeff Fusco, Akron's Deputy Service Director, says he was "taken aback" by the level of destruction in the Gulf Coast. "Entire neighborhoods were blown away," he says. "It was literally like a bomb had gone off and devastated an entire area." Fusco, a former City Council member, worked in New Orleans as a liaison between local government officials and federal agencies. "To see what those people endured made me appreciate my family and my job. For me, it was truly a life-changing experience."

In Pascagoula, Mississippi, **Greg Burgoon** says he saw "acres and acres of destroyed structures." Burgoon, the City's Chief Building Official and Floodplain Administrator, worked under FEMA to assess damaged homes and buildings. "The information was used by FEMA to determine if the structure could be rebuilt or if it was a total loss," Burgoon says. "Those people down there really need our help. The most rewarding experience was having a lady come up to us and say, 'You know, I never liked Yankees, but y'all aren't too bad.'" 

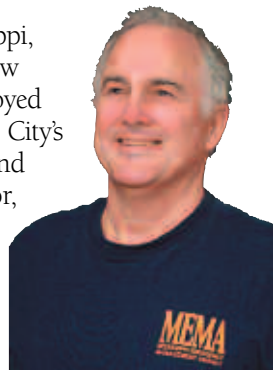


Photo by Lt. Cynthia Christman

Photo by Jeff Fusco



The Civic Theatre, along with many other organizations sponsored Akron's first **Reading Festival** on a Saturday in September at Lock 3 Park. 3,000 children and parents enjoyed story-telling, games, crafts, and buying books. There were authors galore talking about their books. Every child who came to the park was given free books to enjoy later.



This



The 3rd Akron Roadrunner Marathon attracted a record number of runners. Over 4,000 athletes participated, many in 5-person relay teams. Charles Kamindo from Kenya won the men's title in 2:18:48, while Maria Portilla from Peru captured the women's crown in 2:39:09.



s is AKRON

Photos by Bruce Ford



65 Akron high schoolers created permanent benches for patrons as part of the Lock 3 Summer Arts Experience. The benches were the brainchild of artist Dave Thomas of R.G. Thomas Landscaping. Charai Lemon, Jessica Warner and Hadass Harris (left) install broken tile pieces in picture patterns. Wendy Duke (above) runs through a script with students in the theater component. Other students worked with Akron artist Bob Yost to create a ceramic sculpture (top of page) that hangs at the Mayor's office in city hall.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Life savers, dollar savers, time savers, award-winning educators and just plain smart people...we have them all working right here for your municipal government. And every year at this time, City magazine is proud to tell you a little bit about the many honors and awards they have picked up the past year.

No question that our Fire Department has men and women who save lives as part of their daily jobs. But even those for whom heroism is routine have moments of courage that take them above and beyond.

THE EMS STAR OF LIFE AWARDS honor extraordinary rescue/life-saving efforts by emergency service personnel. Last January AFD personnel responded to a Tallmadge Avenue location where 19-year-old **ANDY HOLCOMB** was caught in a shredding machine. Star of Life Awards judges were impressed at the quick-thinking and brave actions that saved Andy from literally being consumed by this machine.

HONORED: Lt. Michael Hausch, David Ewers, Todd Tompkins, Lt. William Johnston, Mike Vegh, Eric Parker, Brian Santee, Lt. James Feeman, Robert Donel, Andrew Seal, Richard Chiancone, Michael DePaul, Keith Forfia, and Lt. Jerome Crawford.

For best overall performance serving the citizens of our fine city, **THE OPTIMIST CLUB FIRE/MEDIC OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR 2005** was presented to **LT. TIM HINMAN**, a 27-year veteran of the Fire Department currently assigned to Fire Station No. 4 on Thornton Street.

On September 11, one of our dedicated firefighter/medics, 13-year veteran **DOSTON JONES**, was honored in a ceremony at Cleveland Browns Stadium. During a summer fire, Jones risked his own life to secure and pull his lieutenant to safety when the floor beneath them gave way.

No one knows how many lives are saved through good, solid teaching. But we're

certain the work of **MARK HARPER** of AFD's public education office has benefited many. So many, in fact, that physicians who work in the field of burn prevention and treatment presented to Mark the **20TH ANNUAL BURN PREVENTION AWARD** in Chicago, for his many years of selfless work in burn prevention education.

Also this year, the Summit County Safety Council presented its **2004 PUBLIC SERVICE SAFETY AWARD** to **CAPT. ALBERT BRAGG** at its 61st annual banquet for his public service announcements that have spanned many years.

Not all award winners, however, work for our Fire Department. The Akron Health Department is proud of **TAMMY KLINE**, a prevention specialist in the Counseling Services and Alcoholism Division. Tammy was given the **C.A.R.E. COMMUNITY AWARD OF APPRECIATION** for her outstanding service and personal commitment to the Six District Educational Compact Schools and Communities. C.A.R.E. is a consortium of Cuyahoga Falls, Stow, Hudson, Kent, Tallmadge and Woodridge school districts working together to develop quality health education for students.

You may not know this, but Akron has what is considered to be one of the very best lead abatement programs in the nation; saving children and parents from the many dangers of living in an environment that exposes them to lead poisoning in its many forms.

In September, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control presented the Akron Health Department's lead abatement program with a \$4 million renewal grant, the largest such grant awarded in the country.

CHRIS PARTIS, grants coordinator and public information officer, was elected president-elect of the Ohio Public Health Association in May 2005 at the OPHA Annual Meeting. OPHA is a statewide pro-

fessional organization and an affiliate of the American Public Health Association.


Our water engineers are constantly working with an eye toward a cleaner environment. As evidence; Akron's Water Pollution Control Division and its Manager **BRIAN GRESSER** received yet another **PEAK PERFORMANCE AWARD** from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA).

The Akron Police Department received a national award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police and Motorola Corporation. Of 135 nominees, Akron placed 11th in the country for a program led by **CAPT. PAUL CALVARUSO** aimed at reducing repeat calls to the same address. Akron saw a 57% decrease in targeted areas in one year.

GENNY BARTH, an engineer in the environmental division of Akron's Bureau of Engineering, was elected president of the Akron Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

And we're proud to report the department is on track to receive a Gold Award for having zero effluent violations in 2005. The award is an objective indicator of overall performance and is a major accomplishment considering that the division was required to manage violations numbering in the hundreds back in the 1980s.

And even leisure pursuits deserve to be recognized. Our city is fortunate to have one of the nation's top-ranked municipal golf courses, Good Park. One of the reasons is golf course manager **LARRY ZIMMERMAN**. Good Park was recognized in 2005 as one of the "Beacon's Best," a popular feature that surveys readers of the *Akron Beacon Journal*.

We are proud of all of our employees. Those who win awards and those who simply work diligently each and every day to make this a wonderful city to live, work, play and to raise a family. Let's give all of them a round of applause! 

GROUND BREAKINGS



We don't think of Fall as the time things start to grow but Autumn 2005 will be remembered as the season when five major construction projects got off the ground.

(Top left) Testa Companies joined Mayor Plusquellic in launching construction of 100 new condos at Northside.

(Center left) The City, the Urban League and the Akron Public Schools

came together on Wooster Avenue as the first shovelful of dirt was moved for the new Helen Arnold Community Learning Center and Urban League headquarters

(Top right) AMHA and H.U.D. officials started the long-awaited Hope VI reconstruction of Elizabeth Park homes known as Cascade Village.

(Center, right) The new mile-long Towpath Trail that will connect downtown Akron to the southern tip of

Cleveland got underway with picks — not shovels — being wielded by the Mayor and officials of the state of Ohio, the Cascade Locks Park Association, Metro Parks, and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition .

(Bottom) And Akron school superintendent Dr. Sylvester Small led the Voris Community Learning Center groundbreaking in Firestone Park.

History

The Selle Generator Works

Historic buildings are now home to high-tech firms

By Dave Lieberth

Where blacksmiths once pounded molten metal into parts for the wagons of the Barnum & Bailey circus, hot metal has given way to “hot tech” at Akron’s newest entry in the National Register of Historic Places.

In November, The Selle Generator Works was added to the nation’s inventory of the most architecturally and historically significant buildings.

Constructed in 1885 as the Selle Wagon Wheel & Gear factory, the buildings between High and Broadway south of the *Beacon Journal*, represent an era when Akron was an industrial center for the manufacture of all kinds of goods. Pronounced “SELL-ee,” the site contains the only standing square chimney in Akron.

At the time when Dr. B.F. Goodrich was nurturing a fledgling rubber industry and Lewis Miller was presiding over a waning empire of mowers and reapers made in Akron, Selle made parts for wagons and carriages until 1903 when it was purchased by the Hower family — shifting their interests from cereal (Quaker Oats) to manufacturing. Succeeding generations of the Hower family operated Selle for nearly a century, stamping metal parts for automobiles and trucks, and even the gasoline gauges on the dirigibles, until it closed in March 2001.

The 70,000-square-foot plant

reflects the evolution of industrial buildings after the 19th century. The oldest timber-frame, red-brick building, dating to 1888, is a gabled, four-story building used by the Selle Gear Co. to make wagon gears, suspensions and parts for horse-drawn carriages.


Purchased in 2002 by developers Tony Troppe and Todd Ederer, the new Selle Generator Works across from Canal Place is now an incubator for entrepreneurial companies. Buildings are being renovated for tenants who will create new jobs in high-tech research and development. The area is already home to Akron’s industrial incubator at Canal Place, which also boasts numerous high-tech entrepreneurs and the global headquarters of GoJo Industries, manufacturer of Purell. The City of Akron’s planned Technology Research Park is on Broadway, around the corner from the University of Akron’s Polymer Center.

The building was an unlikely candidate for restoration when Mayor Plusquellic

walked through the building in early 2002 with Troppe and former owner Otis Hower. There were environmental issues that had to be addressed, and as Hower told the *Beacon Journal*, “The place was falling down around itself.”

Troppe and Ederer, who are partners in the new Hickory Street housing development at Akron’s north end of the Ohio-Erie Canal at Memorial Parkway, see the Selle project as a logical “south terminus” of a corridor featuring Troppe’s eclectic vision, the center of which is Akron’s “own historic district” at Main and Market. That district includes the United building and the Everett, the Nantucket, and the Hermes buildings.

Among the first tenants was Summa Enterprise Group, the new, for-profit subsidiary of Summa Health System that will develop services to market to hospitals here and nationwide. As evidence that there’s life in old factories, the Selle buildings hosted a revival meeting of Akron’s

Young Professional organizations in early 2005. 



Rediscovering the Obvious

By Russ Musarra/Illustration by Chuck Ayers

It was one of the shortest in our series of walks around the community, just a half mile around the block of South High Street, University Avenue, Broadway and Bowery Street, but it led to new perspectives on some old familiar sights.

We came specifically for our first close-up look at the new Summit County Courthouse annex, which was completed last September, but we soon found we were more interested in just about everything else around it.

A light snow had fallen the night before, leaving the heads of the twin lions that guard the courthouse covered with identical white caps. The scene gave artist Chuck Ayers the focus of his illustration.

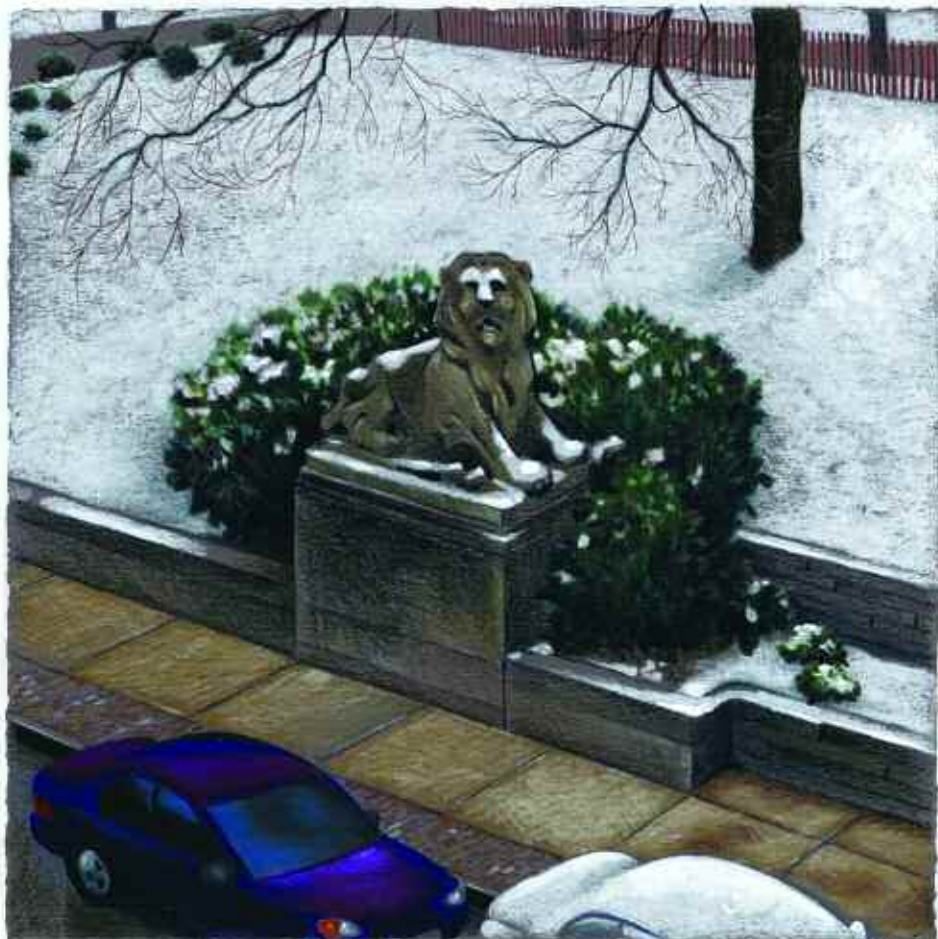
We admired it all standing above South High Street halfway across the skywalk between the courthouse and the county parking deck. It was a good vantage point but Ayers wanted to find a better one, so we walked back to the parking deck and climbed to its roof. The view was worth the effort.

It hit me halfway across the skywalk: 2006 marks the centennial of the courthouse. At least that's what the date—1906—carved over the original entrance suggests.

County records date the courthouse to 1908, the year it was completed. It replaced the original courthouse, which was built in 1843, expanded 24 years later, and demolished in 1905.

The courthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Its historical significance stemmed, in part, from its Second Renaissance Revival design, which included the lions—symbols of the law's majesty—and statues of two seated males at the entrance, one with a scroll and the other with a sheathed sword, representing law and justice.


Construction cost \$337,708 and the first annex, built in 1922 of the same design, cost \$350,000. The price tag to restore the exterior and interior in 1987 was \$7.4 mil-



lion. The new annex, which harmonizes nicely with the design of the courthouse, cost \$17.7 million. It houses the county Clerk of Courts office and the Domestic Relations Court, and has three new courtrooms and 12 additional magistrate-hearing rooms.

We ended our walk on the sidewalk in front of the lions, actually below them. Looking up at the courthouse high above us, we recalled the long broad flight of sandstone steps that originally led from the street level up to the front doors. The lower portion of stairs was removed in 1970 because of high maintenance costs.

My check of county records later revealed a cool fact about the lions: Layers of ice were placed between the lions and their

stone bases so the statues could slowly and gently come to rest without cracking. 

Artist Chuck Ayers and writer Russ Musarra began their series of essays, based on walks around the community, in March 1987 in the Akron Beacon Journal's Sunday magazine. Ayers, a former Beacon Journal artist and editorial cartoonist, created the comic strip "Crankshaft" with Tom Batiuk. Musarra has combined his interests in history and writing into a career spanning 48 years, including reporting duties at both the Beacon Journal and the now-defunct Cleveland Press.

Business Briefs

Carousel Dinner Theater



Carousel owners Joe Palmer and David Slaght

Since 1973, the Carousel Dinner Theatre has been a popular regional entertainment destination. But Joe Palmer, Carousel's executive producer and CEO, has a message for City residents: "If you haven't been to Carousel lately or if you've never been here, you have to check us out."

Palmer, who acquired Carousel in 2003, says, "Try us, we'll surprise the heck out of

"If you haven't been to Carousel lately ... you have to check us out."

you. The moment you walk in the door, you'll smile at our 1940s New York supper club ambiance. The excellent service you get and the sit-down dinner will be unexpected. Most importantly, we have spent a lot of time increasing the quality of our productions. Our shows are as good as anything you'll see at E.J. Thomas Hall or the Cleveland Playhouse."

Carousel began operations in a converted Ravenna supermarket and moved to its current location on East Waterloo Road in 1988. Noting that Carousel is the largest professional dinner theatre in the world, Palmer adds that each musical is self-produced using equity actors under the direction of an exceptional artistic team. "This is one of the best value-added entertainment packages you can find," he says. "We offer live theatre and dinner for about the same cost of paying for parking in New York City. At Carousel, you'll enjoy dinner and a show at a very attractive price." ©



Akron Area Home Buyers' Expo

by Billy Soule

The American dream of homeownership is a goal that nearly all of us aspire to. For many, that dream can now be a reality.

The Akron Area Board of Realtors (AABOR) and the City of Akron are presenting their second annual Akron Area Home Buyers' Expo and Financial Literacy Workshop. The free event is scheduled for Saturday, March 11, 2006 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the John S. Knight Center in downtown Akron.

The Expo provides an opportunity for potential homebuyers to speak with a wide range of professionals about the home buying process. Attendees will have access to Realtors, builders, lenders, home inspectors, and insurance and warranty companies. The event is geared for the first-time buyer, up-graders, empty nesters as well as real estate investors. The Expo will be useful for buyers who are seeking homes in all price points.

Steve Spinelli, AABOR president says the Expo is a great way to kick off the home buying season. "Having all of the real estate professionals together in one location allows buyers and sellers to become familiar with all aspects of the process," he notes, adding, "The Expo helps all types of buyers and sellers to gather information in a casual, fun atmosphere. This event really does help make everyone much more comfortable about starting their home buying or selling experience."

In keeping with the Expo's underlying theme of education, the City of Akron and the U.S. Conference of Mayors are sponsoring two financial literacy workshops, which will be conducted by the Mustard Seed Development Center. The workshops, entitled, "2006 Home Purchasing Strategies," are hour-long sessions designed to help the potential homebuyer with budgeting, credit issues and to better prepare them for the



financial responsibility of homeownership.

Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic, past president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, noted, "The more homeowners Akron has, the stronger Akron will be, because homeownership brings with it a sense of accomplishment, community, and pride that is essential to our growth."

Last year's Expo attracted 32 exhibitors and more than 400 potential homebuyers. This year, attendees can expect to see more than a dozen new exhibitors including not-for-profit organizations and governmental agencies that provide specialized services such as counseling and funding. The Expo is co-sponsored by the *Akron Beacon Journal*.

For more information about the Akron Area Home Buyers' Expo, visit the City of Akron's website at: www.ci.akron.oh.us. ©



The Town Crier

by Russ Musarra

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Each month, Mayor Plusquellic honors one of the City's 2,400 employees for outstanding service and character. Taking bows since our last issue of Akron City Magazine are seven City workers who exemplify what is best about our community.

June honoree **SCOTT DAVENPORT** started his career with the Akron Engineering Bureau in June 1990. Scott's coordination of the Ascot Industrial Park Phase II construction is credited with bringing two new companies into the industrial park. He also won praise for keeping the project within budget and making sure existing businesses had access and were able to remain open. Scott lives in Coventry Crossing with his wife, Carla, and their two sons. For fun, he enjoys photography.



LT. MICHAEL LOZOWY, July's honoree, is involved in all Akron Fire Department training of a medical nature. A firefighter since



September 1978, he was promoted to lieutenant in April 1997 and joined the EMS Bureau five years ago. As the Fire Department's EMS training officer, he often can be found in the office after hours or on his day off attending to details and preparing for an upcoming class. He is coordinator and liaison for special events that require EMS. Playing baseball in the Silver League, riding his motorcycle, horses and traveling are among pastimes he enjoys with his wife, Mary, their children and grandchildren.

August honoree **SGT. MICHAEL YOHE** was in the first Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) class and responded to the highest number of calls involving those in crisis during the program's first year. He became CIT Coordinator when Lt. Mike Woody retired. A police officer since 1995, he was promoted to sergeant in 2001 and is assigned to the Patrol Division. He plays a major role in the application, selection and interviewing process for CIT training and the CIT Outreach Program in which police officers accompany Community



Support Services caseworkers on client home visits. He also maintains the taser equipment, is a SWAT team leader and is in charge of the Bike Unit. Mike earned a bachelor of science in biology from the University of Akron and a master's in secondary education from Kent State University. He is married to Judy, has two stepchildren and loves canoeing, fishing, hiking and bicycling.

Everyone in the City has a better idea about where they are located on any given day, thanks to September recipient **DARREN ROZENEK**.



He has been instrumental in implementing the City's Geographical Information System and has helped make it available to all employees on the City's web site, which includes data for the street lighting program also. Darren began his career in the Public Utilities Bureau as a co-op in August 1994. He became a Surveyor Aide, then an Engineering Technician in May of 1996, and was promoted to his current position of Engineering Technician III in May of 2002. Over the past several years, Darren has supervised the conversion of water main underground records to a digital format. He lives in Ellet with his wife, JoAnne, and their three-year-old twins, Conner and Maria.

MIKE LUTHE, October's EOM, began as a Cable & Line Utility Worker in 1975, and has been a Signal Technician, a Telephone



Technician, and took his current position of Communications Technician III in November 1994. Mike is assigned to the Police and Fire Information Systems group. Known as the "wire guy," he makes sure safety forces are connected through copper and fiber-optic cable to the City's computer systems. His interest in computers and networking began in the late 1980s and grew as the industry did through the years. He enjoys fishing, working on his computer and hiking with his wife and grandchildren on the many Summit County Metro Park trails. He also has a fondness for cooking and makes a "delightful" baked ham. He enjoys retelling the story of serving with the USMC and making fudge in his helmet in Vietnam when he ran out of food rations.

JASON HARRIS,

November's recipient, began working with the City of Akron as a co-op student in June 1991. After graduation from the University of Akron with a Construction Technology degree in June 1996, he was hired as an Engineering Technician and promoted to his current position of Engineering Technician III in November 2001. He is responsible for activities that take a project from the "planning stage" to the "construction complete" stage. His recent accomplishments include the Portage Path Bridge, the Bettes Corners Bridges, and the Honodle Avenue project. He and his wife, Jen, live in Ellet and are the parents of a daughter, Kylie. Jason enjoys coaching his daughter's soccer team along with family outdoor activities including hiking, biking and fishing.



December honoree **MICHELE BUCK** started with the City in May 1984 as a Clerical Intern in the Motor Equipment Bureau. She became a permanent Clerk Typist in the Water



Supply Division and became a Secretary in October 1994. Michele provides administrative support for the Water Supply Division in key areas such as budget preparation and tracking, monitoring the progress of division goals, and tracking division regulatory compliance. She also handles customer inquiries and complaints and is responsible for record retention. For three years, she was a member of the Leading Change Team of the Public Utilities Bureau (an employee committee overseeing the reengineering of the bureau). After 19 years as a member of the committee that organizes the City Picnic each summer, she is currently the vice president of the committee. Michele is from Ellet and is a dedicated family person who is very close to her parents, brother, sister-in-law and niece. In her spare time she enjoys traveling, walking, mountain biking, camping, fishing, canning and baking. Michele recognizes the importance of ensuring that the citizens of Akron receive safe, high-quality drinking water, and the public health responsibility of the Water Supply Division motivates Michele to do her best every day. 



McDonald's Restaurant on East Exchange across from Lee Jackson Field, owned by John Bickle and Richard Heidman, took first prize in 2005. The restaurant takes up a city block in the University Park neighborhood. Manager Tammy Snider reports that business has been great since moving their location closer to downtown. It is hard not to miss the large, metal sculpture of the University of Akron's mascot, Zippy, created by Akron artist John Commuale.

KEEP AKRON BEAUTIFUL

To encourage citizens to take pride in their city by preventing litter and beautifying the environment, the agency has instituted its **Take Pride in Akron Awards** for projects that best meet its Mission Statement. Keep Akron Beautiful develops and implements public education and community improvement programs on litter prevention, recycling, waste management, and beautification to encourage citizens to take pride in Akron by participating in these activities.

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